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Nov. is Court Adoption and Permanency Month

By Dean T. Stout

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As a Superior Court judge, I look forward to presiding over adoption proceedings. Adoption cases are one of the few types of matters coming before the court which evoke joy and celebration on the part of everyone in the courtroom.

During adoption hearings, the use of cameras in the courtroom is not only allowed but encouraged. Adoption hearings are so important that they are given priority and special settings on the court's calendar.

Finalizing an adoption is a very special moment for the family. The occasion is intensely personal. The court strives to conduct adoption proceedings in a dignified manner, so to emphasize and respect the importance of the new legal relationship, yet casual enough to allow for the expression of emotions that are often overwhelming. The joyous courtroom experience is not possible however, without the commitment of adoptive parents.

To the end of providing needed permanency for children, the court recognizes the need and importance of recruiting suitable adoptive parents. The need for adoptive parents is especially critical for children who are older; siblings who want to be adopted together, children from minority cultures; and, children who are physically or mentally challenged.

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption estimates that there are more than 100,000 children in the public child welfare system who are waiting for homes and families. More than 105,000 children in California are living apart from their families in out-of-home care. Recent Adoption and Foster Care statistics reflect that 25 percent of California's children in foster care had spent five or more years in foster homes. Many times children are frequently moved from one foster home or placement to another. Recognizing the need for permanency, the California Judicial Council and California Legislature have declared November to be Court Adoption and Permanency Month.

From time to time, we have cases here in Inyo County where parental rights have been terminated due to proven abuse or neglect, and notwithstanding extraordinary efforts and services, reunification has not been possible. These children then require a stable and permanent home which can provide them the love and care they desperately need and deserve.

By agreement, adoption services in Inyo County are provided by Kern County Department of Human Services-Adoptions in Bakersfield. Should you be interested in exploring the possibility of becoming an adoptive parent, please telephone Mr. Jon Roberson at Kern County Adoptions at (661)868-8933 or (661)868-8900. Mr. Roberson visits Inyo County on a regular basis.

Inyo County Child Protective Services makes available for viewing or loans out a 13-minute video for prospective adoptive parents. To borrow the video or obtain more information on becoming an adoptive parent or foster care provider, please contact Ms. Cathy Rose at Inyo County Child Protective Services by calling (760)872-1727.

Thank you for your consideration.

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